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UNITED STATES-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS:
OVERPOPULATION

by

Joseph A. Fitzpatrick
Commander, USN

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UNITED STATES-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS
OVERPOPULATION

Joseph A. Fitzpatrick
Commander, United States Navy

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to explore the problem of rapid population growth in Latin America and its relationship to the U.S. national interest.

Discussion: The author was compelled to write this paper because he considers overpopulation to be a universal problem concerning the very essence of existence with the survival of mankind at stake. The paper cites the deep concern of many world leaders, including the last five presidents of the United States. There are many areas in the world with rapid population growth but Latin America was chosen because it has the highest rate of population growth of any region in the world and also because of the special relationship which has traditionally existed between Latin America and the United States.

Conclusions:

1. The rate of population growth throughout the world has reached such proportions that it is considered the most pressing problem facing mankind today.

2. Overpopulation in Latin America has reached an alarming status with little hope of any real development until the rate of population growth is curbed.

3. The United States of America, as the richest and most powerful nation on earth has a moral as well as a practical responsibility to take the lead in helping to solve this problem, not for its own aggrandizement, but for the benefit and welfare of mankind.

4. The United States has a special interest in the rate of population growth in Latin America, not only from a humanitarian viewpoint but also because of the strategic implications. To have 600 million souls enveloped in poverty, misery and despair and thus ripe for revolution on its southern flank is certainly not in the national interest of the United States.

5. The major theme of the present U.S. policy on population is family planning/birth control. The policy includes participation and cooperation with international organizations plus providing bilateral assistance when requested.

6. The present U.S. policy is sound, especially in Latin America, because to attempt to compel Latin Americans to practice birth control would only inflame suspicions that our only concern is to keep them underpopulated and weak.

Recommendation: The only recommendation emanating from this study is a "modest proposal" which calls for the United States to apply its vast technological know-how to develop a simple system to make the "rhythm system" work and then to enlist the aid of the Church as the most powerful "engine of change" in Latin America to help solve the population problem.

–60 pages

PREFACE

As the father of nine children, I am personally aware of the economic aspects of providing the basic elements of food, shelter, clothing, and education for my family. Instead of purchasing food for four people, I must purchase food for eleven people (myself, my wife and nine children); instead of living in a two- or three-bedroom home, I need at least a five-bedroom home; instead of buying two pairs of children's shoes, I need to buy nine pairs; and instead of providing the means of a college education for two children, I must provide the means for nine children.

My own personal situation is cited as an example to emphasize the very obvious fact that the more people who exist, the more resources must be available in order to provide the basics of human life. Fortunately, my position is such that I can provide all of the minimum needs for my family; although the prospect of providing for their higher

needs--namely, a college education for all nine children--is not adequately assured. If my resources were suddenly to dwindle, the quality of the four basic elements listed above would be reduced first; and, secondly, if my resources were to be still further reduced, the order of elimination would necessarily include education on a higher level, then clothing, shelter and food. It can readily be seen that the elimination or reduction of higher education for my children would result in a severe handicap for them in terms of developing their own resources and earning capacity, and, in turn, in their own children ad infinitum; the elimination of clothing would result in nakedness; the elimination of shelter would result in exposure, and the elimination of food would result in death from malnutrition eventually, for those not already dead from exposure or disease.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the United States of America, the richest country on earth, 25 million people or 12 percent of the population are classified "poor" as defined in the poverty index developed by the Social Security Administration.[1] To the poor, poverty is no statistical or sociological matter. Their deprivation is real and their condition exists as a daily fight for survival. What may be said simply is that millions of our fellow citizens are living in severe poverty, with few prospects for a better life and often with little hope for the future. The poverty index is based on the Department of Agriculture's measure of the cost of a temporary low-budget, nutritious diet for households of various sizes. This means, of course, that the income for 25 million U.S. citizens is insufficient to provide a nutritious diet. Too much imagination is not required, therefore, to realize the plight and the sub-human quality of life of the many millions of

people in the less developed countries of the world. Further, it is not difficult to recognize that not only the maintenance of even the most sub-human standards of living for millions is threatened, but that even the survival of mankind is endangered if the population throughout the world continues to increase without at least a comparable increase in the availability of basic necessities.

One of the greatest problems facing mankind today is the population growth forecast by the demographers. It is projected that the present world population of 3.5 billion will double to 7 billion by the year 2000, only 30 years away. If the present growth trend continues after the year 2000, it would take only five more years for the 8 billion mark to be reached. Further projection would be almost sheer folly as a population growth of such magnitude would be preposterous. And yet, the statistical reality is of such alarming proportions that the special consideration of the problem of population explosion is

imperative and required not only of the world's "experts" but of all humanity.

On July 18, 1969, President Richard M. Nixon delivered the first special message on population from a United State's Chief of State. In his message the President stated:

> Protein malnutrition is widespread. It is estimated that every day some 10,000 people--most of them children--are dying from diseases of which malnutrition has been at least a partial cause. Moreover, the physical and mental potential of millions of youngsters is not realized because of a lack of proper food. The promise for increased production and better distribution of food is great, but not great enough to counter these bleak realities.[2]

The deaths of 10,000 people daily from lack of food, not to mention the uncounted numbers of those suffering severe physical and mental disorders from malnutrition indicates that we are faced with a moral and physical crisis involving the survival of mankind. Moreover, it can be argued that the United States of America with its vast resources and technological know-how has a moral responsibility to take the lead in efforts to deal with this crisis. More than 700 years

ago a famous poet remarked that the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in time of moral crisis remain neutral. And, more than 1900 years ago, someone else observed:

> If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?[3]

These words express, in many people's viewpoint, the precise nature of the ethical duty and moral imperative placed on the United States in relation to the entire world in any confrontation with the problem of population explosion.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the problem of population explosion, particularly in Latin America; to investigate the present U.S. policy toward the problem as it relates to the partnership concept expressed in the Nixon Doctrine; and further, to attempt to determine what further the U.S. can do as the world's leader to help solve this potentially catastrophic problem of mankind. Latin America was chosen because its population is increasing at a faster rate

than any other region in the world and because as President Nixon has stated:

> Throughout our history we have accorded the other American nations a special place in our foreign policy. This unique relationship is rooted in geography, in a common Western heritage and in a shared historical experience of independence born through revolution.[4]

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF POPULATION GROWTH: ITS EXISTENCE AND RECOGNITION

The fact that a population problem does, in reality, exist in the world has been adequately expressed by most of the world's leaders. On Human Rights Day, December 10, 1966, a Declaration on Population was signed by twelve heads of state and presented to U Thant. On the same day, a year later, eighteen more signatories added their names. (See Appendix A for list of nations.) One significant observation included in the Declaration is:

> Too rapid population growth seriously hampers efforts to raise living standards, to further education, to improve health and sanitation, to provide better housing and transportation, to forward cultural and recreational opportunities - and even in some countries to assure sufficient food. In short, the human aspiration, common to men everywhere, to live a better life is being frustrated and jeopardized.[5]

On the occasion of the Declaration, U Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations, supported the essential

intention of the document with the following observation:

> We are concerned with the number of human beings on earth. We bear an immense responsibility for the quality of human life in future generations. I have no doubt that we can succeed. Man has shown increasing ability to master his environment. He is now acquiring the knowledge, as well as the means, to master himself and his own future. It is his duty to do so - for his own sake and for the sake of succeeding generations to whom we must bequeath a life worthy of human beings. There now exists in many countries an express desire to limit size of families. But this right of parents to free choice will remain illusory unless they are aware of the alternatives open to them.[6]

The above opinion and the conviction of the thirty heads of state who affixed their names to the Declaration on Population have been consistently reiterated and reinforced by other prominent world leaders.

World Bank President, Robert McNamara, in an address given at the University of Notre Dame on May 1, 1969 was clear and emphatic:

> To put it simply: the greatest single obstacle to the economic and social advancement of the majority of the peoples in the under-developed world is rampant population growth.[7]

Five Presidents of the United States have also shown

their increasing concern with the problem of population expansion. Both Presidents Truman and Eisenhower manifested their awareness and concern for the problem by serving as Honorary Chairmen of the Planned Parenthood Movement. John Kennedy, when he served as President of the United States, showed an acute concern for the problem and its implications on both the domestic and foreign scene. President Kennedy's awareness of the meaning of increased population growth on our foreign relations policy and worldwide strategy was universal. However, he did focus on the magnitude of the problem as it existed in Latin America from the vantage point of humane consideration and strategic significance to our country. In his foreign aid message to Congress in March 1962, President Kennedy directed particular attention to the Latin American countries:

> The magnitude of the problem is staggering. In Latin America, for example, population growth is already threatening to outpace economic growth - and in some parts of the continent living standards are actually declining.
>
> In 1945, the population of our twenty sister American republics was 145 million. It is now greater than that of the United States and by the year 2000, less than 40 years away, Latin American population will

> be 592 million, compared with 312 million for the United States.
>
> Latin America will have to double its real income in the next thirty years simply to maintain already low standards of living.[8]

In the following administration, President Johnson showed the same concern as his predecessors and increasing awareness of the responsibilities of the United States in assuming a position of leadership in dealing with the problem of population growth. In his State of the Union Message to Congress in January 1965, President Johnson promised:

> I will seek new ways to use our knowledge to help deal with the explosion in world population and the growing scarcity in world resources.[9]

Following this, President Nixon also recognizing the gravity of the situation, saw the need to deliver a special Presidential Message on Population to the Congress of the United States on July 18, 1969.

The most recent expression of concern for the problem of population growth by a high-ranking American official was given in an address to the General Assembly of the United Nations on September 30, 1970, by United States Representative, Ambassador Charles W.

Yost. In his address, Yost stated that there could be no progress, nor justice, nor peace for the majority of mankind if population growth outstrips all other available means of development. In one of the most unequivocable statements on the subject read by this author, Ambassador Yost points out the core of the problem:

> In recent years people all over the world have suddenly awakened to the inexorable and tragic fact that excessive population growth can, if continued much longer, frustrate all our hopes for peace, justice and progress.[10] (emphasis mine)

General Consideration of the Problem

Thus we see a recognition and concern for the problem of population explosion which has become increasingly urgent. However, up until the recent past, and certainly, no earlier than the post-World War II period, population was thought of solely in terms of tribe, clan, culture group, religious group, or nation. Prior to the eighteenth century, until about the time of Malthus, population growth was encouraged for its economic value. More children were needed to till the

land to provide food, or if more land was needed, to provide soldiers to conquer land from less fertile neighbors. This idea prevailed to some extent up until World War II (viz., Hitler's Germany). Nevertheless, by the time Malthus was making his economic observation, the relations of the ruler and the ruled began to change. People were no longer stock like cattle, but were changing to subjects for whom the ruler was forced to take responsibility. If the ruler failed in his responsibilities or exercised his prerogatives unjustly, people rioted and threatened the civil order, as evidenced by the storming of the Bastille in 1789 and the near destruction of Detroit in 1967. These factors and the potential of an ever-expanding population have made population growth no longer something merely to be encouraged and exploited but something to be regarded with great seriousness and direction, particularly in the underdeveloped nations.

The handicap that population increase imposes on the underdeveloped nations has become especially clear. With 43 percent of the population under 15 years of age, the small amount of money which might be

available for investment and the development of the economy is siphoned off by the needs of the children. Lack of investment and economic development begets further underdevelopment. When the children grow up they do not have the wherewithal to become productive workers: either they cannot find jobs, or if they do so, they work unproductively; nor do they acquire enough of a stake in the system to motivate them to limit the number of their own children, and thus the pattern continues.

It has also become apparent that the viewpoint of the past that overpopulation of the tribe or nation could be solved by conquest is no longer valid. In the present day, having more children beyond a certain point does not increase the capacity for total conquest or for total influence. Conversely, it only makes for deeper poverty in a deteriorating environment. This process of deterioration is experienced in many underdeveloped nations as increasing social, political and economic disintegration. The profound significance of such a process of disintegration occurring is that the chaos created by such a situation would lend itself to

the aims and intentions of world revolutionaries. The United States cannot permit this to happen if it can be prevented, and it is particularly expedient to attempt to prevent such a situation occurring in Latin America. For strategic reasons the loss of Latin America, which might be termed our vulnerable southern flank, to anti-U.S. revolutionaries would be disastrous.

The Situation in Latin America

In testimony before the Subcommittee on Foreign Expenditures of the Committee on Government Operations in July 1965, Albert Lleras Camargo, an outstanding figure in Latin American politics and former President of Colombia, made the following statement:

> If the population increase were not proceeding at such an inordinate rate, the problem would be manageable. But at the current rate, it is beyond manageable proportions, and certainly beyond the capacities of Latin Americans to cope with it. Latin America is breeding miseries, revolutionary pressures, famine and many other potentially disastrous problems in proportions that exceed our imagination even in the age of thermonuclear warfare.[11]

Table 1 shows the most recent demographic figures compiled by the United Nations for North

TABLE 1

POPULATION INCREASE IN NORTH AND LATIN AMERICA

	1930	1940	1950	1960	1969
North America	134M	144M	166M	199M	224M
Latin America	108M	130M	163M	213M	276M

Annual Rate of Increase

	1960-69	1963-69	Birth Rate	Death Rate
North America	1.4%	1.2%	19/1000	9/1000
Latin America	2.9%	2.9%	40/1000	11/1000

Source: Demographic Yearbook 1969, Statistical Office of the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 1970.

America (U.S. and Canada) and Latin America. It should be noted that whereas the annual rate of increase for North America shows a downward trend, the annual rate of increase for Latin America has remained constant. Projecting these annual rates of increase to the year 2000 indicates that the population of Latin America will be greater than 600 million, whereas the population of North America would be approximately 300 million. Carrying this one step further to the year 2020 and using the same annual rates indicates that the population of Latin America would pass the one billion mark, whereas the population of North America would only be approaching the 400 million mark. To place this in another perspective would mean that a young man of 20 years today would have only reached his 70th birthday in the year 2020. And with the prospect of increased longevity brought about by medical and scientific advancement, the economic needs of one young man would necessarily increase with his age. The implications of this applied to the figures shown on Table 1 are another significant factor in considering population growth in Latin America.

Unless the economic development in Latin America can keep pace with the population growth, surely the prophecy of Lleras Camargo will come to pass. Nelson Reckefeller, in his report to President Nixon on August 30, 1969, added another dimension to the problem. On return from his extensive tour of the Latin American countries, Rockefeller reported to the President:

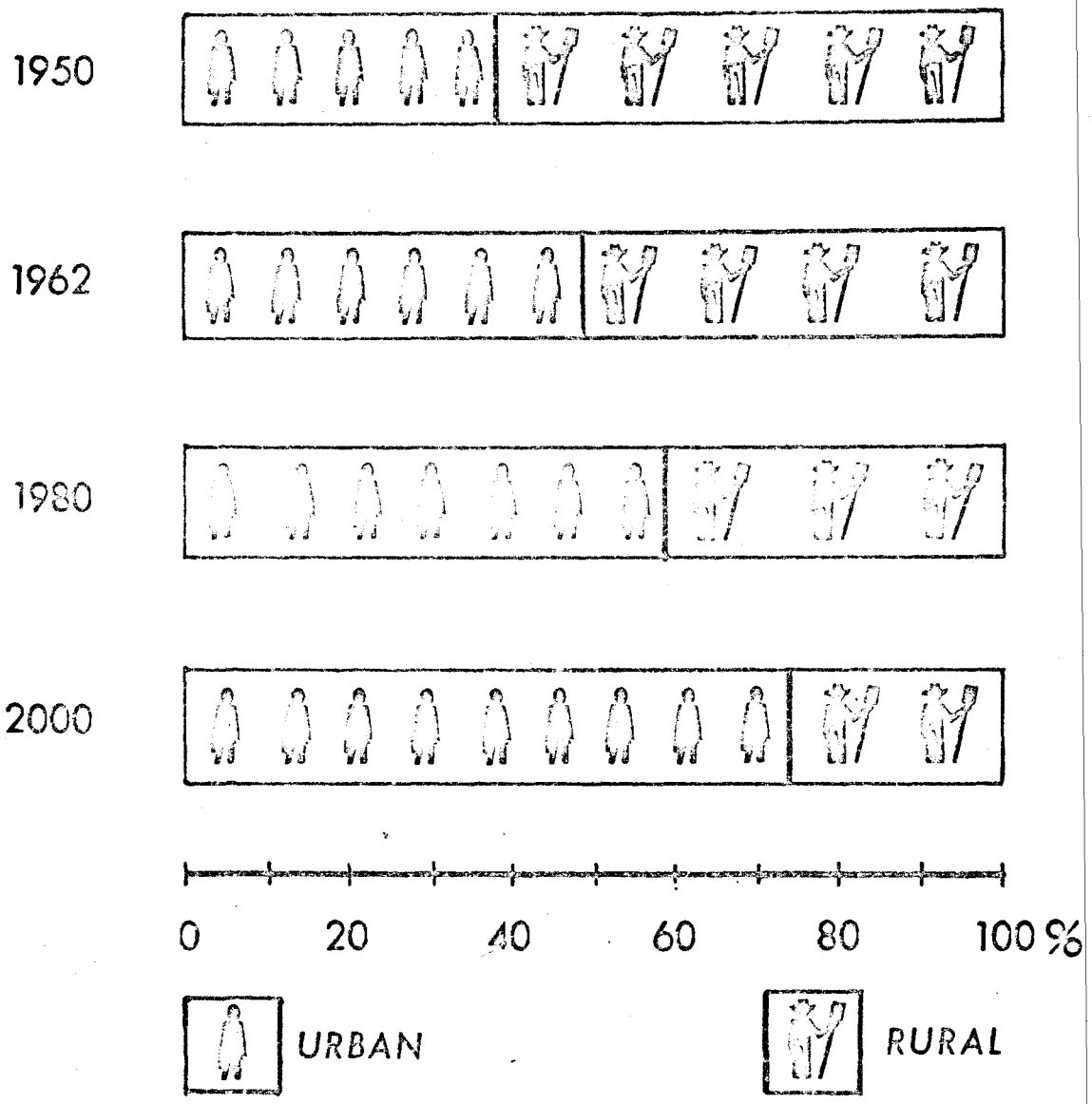
> The fact that over 60% of the population is now under 24 years of age has greatly increased the demands on government for more schools, more health services, more housing and roads - services beyond their resources to provide. It produces an increasing labor supply which cannot find enough work and thus adds to the frustrations and tensions. It results in slum growth and a multiplication of the problems of urban life, and it cancels out so much of the economic growth achieved as to make improvements of living standards difficult, if not impossible.[12]

Thus, the problems of population growth in Latin America will become increasingly evidenced in the growth of the cities. The problems of urban life will increase as more and more people are crowded into the slums. Table 2 shows the projected percentage of the urban and rural population of Latin America.

TABLE 2

PROJECTED URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION OF LATIN AMERICA

Data for 1950 and 1962 from ECLA: *Economic Survey of Latin America, 1964.* New York, United Nations, 1966.



Joseph Marion Jones, in Does Overpopulation Mean Poverty?[13] has estimated a series of relationships between the variables of population growth and economic growth as indicated in the following table:

POPULATION GROWTH RATES AND SAVINGS AND INVESTMENTS REQUIRED

If the population is growing each year by	A country must save and invest each year at least	In order merely to
1 per cent	3 per cent of national income	Maintain per capita income unchanged--meaning no improvement in the average living levels
2 per cent	6 per cent of national income	
3 per cent	9 per cent of national income	

If the population is growing each year by	A country must save and invest each year at least	In order to achieve an annual increase in per capita income of
2 per cent	9 per cent of national income	1 per cent
3 per cent	15 per cent of national income	2 per cent

The relationship between population growth rates and the total savings and investments required clearly points out the effort which will be needed (a) merely to maintain current economic conditions, without raising the average per capita income, and (b) to bring about an increase in per capita income.

Outside the United States and Canada the rate of overall economic progress in the rest of the Western

Hemisphere has produced an increase in the gross national product at an average annual rate of 4.9 percent. However, since the population growth is 2.9 percent per annum, this has yielded an increase of only 2 percent per annum in production per person. Projecting these trends indicates that although the gross national product would double in 15 years, it would take 35 years to double the per capita production which supports the rise in living standards for individuals.[14] To quote Nelson Rockefeller: "This is just not good enough."[15]

Dr. Jorge Eliezer Ruiz, director of the Population Bureau's Latin American office, puts the picture for present-day Latin America as follows after describing the effects of rapid population increase on housing, morals, and public health:

> No economist, finally, would seriously attempt to ignore the fact that it is impossible to achieve the economic surplus necessary for the take-off toward development in societies where the new beings which enter life continually use up this surplus, so painfully obtained, for their own physical survival.[16]

Every effort must be made to increase the rate of

economic growth, and this should be a broad hemisphere objective; but along with this, strong efforts must be made to slow down the population growth in order to make the increase in living standards more meaningful. Neglecting any natural or man-made catastrophe, the only way to decrease the population growth is to increase the death rate or decrease the birth rate. The latter might be considered more feasible.

CHAPTER III

UNITED STATES POSITION

U.S. National Interest re Overpopulation in Latin America

A national interest is defined as a highly generalized concept of elements that constitute the State's most vital needs, including self-preservation, independence, national integrity, military security and economic well-being among others.[17]

It is probably difficult for anyone at this time to envision Latin America jeopardizing the vital needs of the United States. However, it is certainly not in our interest to have a continent to the south of 600 million souls teeming with poverty and misery. Poverty and misery create unrest, and unrest often breeds revolution. At this moment there are already two Latin American nations with Marxist governments, one of which is aligned with the Soviet Union. It is not too difficult to envision additional revolutionary

regimes, some of which might seek aid or alliance with powerful states hostile to the United States.

It is in this vein that one must consider the partnership concept of the Nixon doctrine as it pertains to Latin America. The United States has often been accused of a paternalistic attitude toward the other nations of the hemisphere. The partnership concept, wherein obligations as well as benefits must be shared, is as applicable to the population expansion problems in Latin America as it is to the Vietnamization program in Southeast Asia. However, this will be no easy task. Nelson Rockefeller summed up the relations between the United States and the other American Republics after his recent tour in one phrase:

> The United States has allowed the special relationship it has historically maintained with the other nations of the Western hemisphere to deteriorate badly.[18]

It is in the national interest for the United States to revive its special relationship with the nations of this hemisphere and to assist those nations within the "partnership concept" to improve the quality of life of all Americans. Family planning/birth control

is a necessary element to achieve the level of economic development required to improve the quality of life in Latin America.

U.S. Population Policy re Family Planning

Family planning through birth control is an important part of U.S. population policy; it is not the only U.S. consideration, however. Philander C. Claxton, Jr., Special Assistant for Population Matters to the Secretary of State, indicates that under no circumstances does the United States consider efforts to reduce high birth rates to be a substitute for economic development and social progress but rather that family planning is an integral part of population policy lest high birth rates eradicate any progress that is made in the economic and social areas.[19]

In January 1965, the United States Agency for International Development (AID) made known that it was prepared to entertain requests for assistance in support of family planning programs. This offer did not

then include the supply of contraceptives, which were considered to be within the means of any national program.

In a 1966 report on the Alliance for Progress, Senator Robert F. Kennedy strongly supported assistance to family planning programs of Latin American countries wishing our help. He stated as follows:

> I believe we should provide assistance to any nation which decides that family planning and population control are in its national interest. To make such assistance more helpful, we should now accelerate our own research into population control devices and techniques. Every effort should be made to inform the Latin American governments and people: on what assistance is available; on how to plan sound population control policies and programs; and on what the consequences can be of various courses of action or inaction. We cannot attempt to compel Latin Americans to practice birth control; this would only inflame suspicions that we seek to keep them underpopulated and weak. But we should stand ready to help; we should encourage any efforts they undertake to make themselves more aware of their problem; and, while recognizing that the decisions must be made freely by Latin Americans themselves, we should help them make the decision that is truly in the interest of their people and serves the goals of the Alliance.[20]

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee in its July 1966 reports on the foreign aid bill criticized AID for doing too little in population/family planning. The report stated:

> The committee is deeply concerned about the impact of population growth on the developing countries. Many of the benefits from aid are offset by population growth. Unless greater progress is made in control programs even massive aid will be relatively ineffective in raising living standards in many underdeveloped countries. Because of population growth too many developing nations are like the country described by the Queen in "Alice in Wonderland" where "it takes all the running (they) can do, to keep in the same place."[21]

In 1967 Congress enacted an amendment to the foreign aid authorizing legislation entitled "Title X. Programs Relating to Population Growth." It permitted loan funds to be used for grants and earmarked $35 million of aid funds to be used solely for population/family planning purposes. In fiscal year 1969 this was raised to $50 million, in fiscal year 1970 to $75 million, and for fiscal year 1971 it is set at $100 million. And in May of 1967, the Administrator of AID announced that AID would provide contraceptives as

part of the U.S. program of assistance to countries requesting that form of help.

The current population policy of the United States is summarized by President Nixon in his message on population wherein he stated:

> It is our belief that the United Nations, its specialized agencies, and other international bodies should take the leadership in responding to world population growth. The United States will cooperate fully with their programs. . . . we provide assistance to countries which seek our help in reducing high birth rates--provided always that the services we make available can be freely accepted or rejected by the individuals who receive them.[22]

It is not the intent of the United States to force family planning on any nation by such measures as withholding economic aid or any other means. However, the United States does consider population growth to be a world problem and considers family planning/birth control an important element in helping to solve that problem. President Nixon concluded:

> In sum, population growth is a world problem which no country can ignore, whether it is moved by the narrowest perception of national self-interest or the widest vision of a common humanity.[23]

CHAPTER IV

THE CHALLENGE

The concept of population control faces many obstacles in Latin America. Opposition to family planning/birth control among decision makers in Latin America stems primarily from three overlapping sources: the Conservative Nationalists, the Marxist/Non-Marxist Left and the Church. In fairness, it must be stated that the Church is not opposed to family planning per se and even permits the regulation of birth through the use of the "rhythm" system. But the Church is violently opposed to abortion, which is considered murder; and artificial means of birth control, which are considered violations of the natural law. However, the most significant opposition to family planning/ birth control comes from the deep-rooted traditional cultural values of the people themselves.

Nationalists

The majority of nationalists are conservative, older generation, well-educated traditionalists, who,

despite a frequent orthodox Catholicism, oppose family planning programs for nationalistic reasons rather than out of doctrinaire religious considerations. They primarily believe that Latin America is sparsely settled and that increased population is required to exploit the potential abundance of natural resources throughout the continent. Typical of this attitude is a statement made by Victor Haya de la Torre, a Peruvian party leader, when he declared in March of 1968 that what Peru had plenty of was land and that if the problems of making it productive were gigantic, then Peru should generate and grow a race of giants to conquer Peruvian geography.[24] Also, Peru's Minister of Health, Javier Arias Estelle, hastened to state immediately following the Papal Encyclical, that birth control was not justified in Peru, given its low density, and that on the contrary a larger population was necessary to exploit the nation's greatest riches.[25]

Another aspect of what the nationalists feel is that family planning/birth control is a tool of the imperialists and capitalists who wish to continue hegemony over Latin America such that there will be

no cessation of profits but on the contrary an increase of profits at the expense of people of Latin America. Dr. Herman Vergara, a Psychiatrist and Professor of Psychology in Colombia, in a monograph entitled, Antecedents and Questions Concerning Demographic Policy, has stated:

> The U.S. has sent to our countries its contraceptive brigades for the same reason that imperial Rome sent its legions into those nations in its sphere of influence . . ..[26]

Marxist/Non-Marxist Left

The hard line of the Marxists maintains that overpopulation is peculiar to and a defect of the capitalist system, and could not exist under a communist system. This hard line has been watered down in recent years when the Soviets, who appear to oppose government-sponsored population limitation on one hand, on the other legalize abortion and encourage the use of contraceptives. And then between May and December 1966, on three occasions the Soviet Government voted for instead of against United Nations resolutions on population.[27]

The Marxists of Latin America hold closer to the hard line at this time but only because of the ulterior motive that the increase of poverty and misery brought about by overpopulation will speed up the revolution. There is no doubt that the Marxists have an impact on the population policies of Latin America, but this author considers that the impact of the Non-Marxist Left is more credible.

The intellectuals of the Non-Marxist Left envision themselves as representing Latin American interests against the schemes of ineptitude of family planning abroad, especially in the United States. They reflect an extraordinary insight into the paternalism and lack of sensitivity which have traditionally governed programs initiated by the United States in Latin America. Essentially, they are skeptical and look upon the population programs of the United States as they relate to Latin America as mysterious and even ominous. They feel that to adopt birth control before development would frustrate social change and maintain Latin America in a permanent condition of dependence on the United States.

Darcy Ribeiro, former Minister of Education in Brazil, in an article entitled "Genocide with Pills"[28] argues that "birth control" will fail in Latin America because of an "unsuspected moral resistance" by underdeveloped people to the habits of more advanced countries and "also because of the opposition to such programs by the most lucid Latin American leaders." He cites three reasons for this opposition: First, family planning aims at frustrating the development of a mixed Latin American race, which he envisions as a more homogeneous type of human being, who will possess a greater aptitude for living with and identifying with all peoples. Second, Ribeiro charges that family planning seeks to curb the expansion of Latin America and especially Brazil into major world forces by keeping their population low and changing their composition from predominantly young to predominantly old. And finally, Ribeiro argues that the pressure exerted by large populations contributes to necessary changes in social structure and that population increase represents a "basic factor of social renovation."

Ivan Illich, Director of the Intercultural Center of Documentation in Mexico, believes that family planning will fail because the people will resist the alien manner in which it is presented. In his essay "Popular Control of Power and Potency,"[29] Illich indicates that family planning is merely one aspect of a multifaceted effort by the dictators of consumption and that the intrauterine device is "the North American serpent which solicits the tropical Eve to taste the apple of abundance." He further states that family planning, like other appeals to a better standard of living, is a myth and deception because under present circumstances it will not alter the status of the poor.

The general theme of the intellectuals appears to be that U.S. Promotion of family planning in Latin America is in the best interests of the United States but will only hamper the advancement efforts and social reform of Latin America. They consider that family planning, once put into practice, is not neutral and can become a cloak for manipulation of weak nations by strong nations. Such external and internal manipulation constitutes the life story of most Latin Americans.

Thomas G. Saunders, a faculty associate of the American Universities Field Staff, states that the liberal left looks with attitudes ranging from apprehension to disdain at still another program emanating from those outside who are sufficiently comfortable and powerful to work out such solutions.[30]

The Church

Prior to "Humanae Vitae," an encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the regulation of birth, there was hope throughout the world among Catholics and non-Catholics alike that the Church would relent on its traditional opposition to birth control. This hope was generated by the discussions of Vatican II[31] and more specifically by the deliberate declaration of Pope Paul VI in his encyclical "Populorum Progressio," which was hailed by the community of nations as a major contribution to the discussion of public policy and population. In this encyclical, the Pope spoke specifically to the question of family limitation as follows:

> It is true that too frequently an accelerated demographic increase adds its own difficulties to the problems of

> development: the size of the population increases more rapidly than available resources . . .. It is certain that public authorities can intervene, within the limit of their competence by favouring the availability of appropriate information and by adopting suitable measures, provided that these be in conformity with the moral law and that they respect the rightful freedom of married couples. . . . Finally it is for the parent to decide, with full knowledge of the matter, on the number of their children.[32] (emphasis mine)

At this time there was certainly an element within the Church, which believed that in "freedom of conscience," parents could use almost any means of birth control save abortion. Among this group were many who believed that in certain circumstances, use of contraceptives, particularly the pill, did not violate the moral order. The Jesuit priest, George H. Dunne, assistant to the President of Georgetown University for International Programs, made the following statement regarding the pill:

> I confess to being one of those who have hoped that the use of oral contraceptives, or the pill as it is generally described, would be found a morally acceptable method of bringing population growth under reasonable control.[33]

And then in late July 1968, Pope Paul VI issued his controversial encyclical "Humanae Vitae," renewing the traditional Catholic proscription of the use of artificial contraception in marriage. After emphatically stating "directly willed and procured abortion" plus "direct sterilization" are illicit means of birth control, the encyclical further states:

> Similarly excluded is every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible.[34]

The encyclical immediately met widespread opposition throughout the world. A group of theologians at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. prepared a statement, eventually signed by more than 650 fellow professionals, which acknowledged the Pope's authority but questioned his use of it in this case, as well as the reasoning behind the decision, and in effect denied that the decision was universally binding.[35]

In Latin America, the controversy raged as in other parts of the world. For many in Latin America,

the Pope's message is happily accepted as it supports the position already set forth by conservatives, intellectuals, some politicians and even the Marxists. Within the Latin Church as elsewhere, there is great controversy. In Brazil, the Most Reverend Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of Recife and Olinda, who is known as one of the most progressive Bishops in Latin America, said:

> For my part, I will do everything I can to understand and accept faithfully the directive, which will not be an easy thing in our underdeveloped area.[36]

The above was taken from the New York Times and yet three days later in the Christian Science Monitor, the Archbishop was quoted as saying:

> It would not be easy to obey the Papal Encyclical, particularly in the underdeveloped regions of Brazil.[37]

Excluding the reactions of the extreme, the above two statements typify the reaction of the Latin Church--namely, that the directive will be accepted but that it would not be easy. Because of this acceptance of the directive on the part of the Church, there are many who prophesy dire consequences. Typical of this is the statement made by the Committee on Population

of the Organization of American States. The Committee said:

> The meaning of the encyclical can be translated into increased anguish, misery, despair and sickness for millions of Latin Americans.[38]

Traditional Cultural Values

Any discussion of Latin American attitudes toward family planning/birth control must begin with the concepts of "macho" (male, robust, virile) and "machismo" (the quality of being macho). The essential meaning of "macho" relates to sex, and the ideal is a man who flaunts his maleness by excelling in sexual activity. Richard W. Patch, a Professor of Anthropology at the State University of New York, states "The ideal of machismo insures that most males at least aspire to produce annually one legitimate child and several, often acknowledged, children of the street."[39] Arthur F. Corwin lends credence to this proposition when he states:

> It seems evident that the machismo complex in the lower classes and the cult of masculinity among all classes of men must

> powerfully influence the rate on conception among women.[40]

Although machismo is probably one of the more important aspects in preventing a decline in fertility in Latin America, there are also other cultural values and characteristics contributing to large population growth. The most complete and concise list this author had come across is contained in a paper written by Dr. Calvert L. Dedrick, the chief of the international statistical programs of the Bureau of the Census, on the occasion of the 37th Annual Conference of the Catholic Association for International Peace held in Washington, D. C. in October 1964. It is quoted in its entirety as follows:

> (1) The "large family pattern" has existed throughout the history of this area, especially among rural and village people. To have many offspring is one of the proofs that a man is "muy macho" and that his wife is a good wife and mother. For hundreds of years high infant and maternal mortality has been a factor thwarting the attainment of large families.
>
> (2) Early marriage of girls, except those in the upper social class (who appear most often in Spanish literature), is accepted as natural. Census tables of number of children ever born by age of mother show significant numbers of children born to mothers as young as thirteen

> to fifteen years of age, especially in rural areas.
>
> (3) Common-law marriages--in Spanish called "consensual unions"--are culturally acceptable in many areas. Formal marriage is still considered an upper-class behavior in many rural areas and among the poorer class of urban areas. In 1950 the censuses of seven countries showed 20 per cent or more of the population over fifteen years of age as living in consensual unions. Although many of these unions are relatively stable, some lasting for the lifetime of the couple, others are of shorter duration.
>
> (4) Employment of children at an early age, not only in agricultural but nonagricultural activities, is not frowned on by the community if it is a large and/or poor family. This results in the sacrifice of the education of many children and swells the supply of unskilled labor.
>
> (5) Ignorance of an elementary knowledge of human physiology and hygiene has resulted from generations of illiterate ancestors and the taboo on the discussion of sex and procreation.[41]

Thus, it can be seen that the obstacles to population control in Latin America range from the deep-rooted traditions of the people themselves to the attitudes of the intellectuals, with such diverse factions as the Catholic Church and the Marxists agreeing, albeit for different reasons. The obstacles are indeed formidable and what success will be made in overcoming

these significant deterrents to successful population control in Latin America, only the future can know.

CHAPTER V

A MODEST PROPOSAL

One of the most original and macabre population policies ever suggested would, had it been placed into practice, undoubtedly have had a substantial effect on the problem it was intended to solve. Jonathan Swift, author of Gulliver's Travels, concerned over the population crisis which existed in Ireland because of a growing disparity between the number of inhabitants and food resources, proposed in 1729 that the Irish eat their newborn, thereby simultaneously helping to solve the problem of food supply and population growth.[42]

The point of this observation is that population, like any other kind of policy, must enclose the realistic possibility of its application. The population policy of the United States with regard to family planning/birth control as it relates to Latin America --namely, to provide aid if requested--is realistic albeit not too effective. The challenge as outlined

in the previous chapter almost belies a solution. However, there are two areas--namely, partnership (versus paternalism) and education--in which the United States might make some headway.

Most policy makers in the United States, including the President, are aware of the deleterious effect that the paternalistic attitude has had on the relations between the U.S. and Latin America. Knowing the problem is half the battle. The President of the U.S. had taken a small first step when he partially untied the restrictions on loan dollars, which previously required that recipient countries import only U.S. goods they would not have imported under normal trade conditions. President Nixon said:

> I ordered that from November 1, all loan dollars sent to Latin America under AID be freed to allow purchases not only in the U.S. but anywhere in Latin America.[43]

It is not the intent of this paper to enumerate the various ways and means of establishing a feeling of partnership instead of paternalism. Suffice it to say that this is a mandatory first step in improving our relations with Latin America, regardless of the

field of endeavor. Enough words have been spoken; now is the time for action.

By education is meant beginning instruction at the primary school level in the basic facts of population growth and its consequences for the nation and the impact on family welfare of numbers of children which exceed the capacity of the family to provide satisfactorily for them. A population education policy implemented in primary and secondary schools would reach an increasing proportion of the populations of Latin American countries, since generally the percentage of children of school age enrolled in educational institutions is growing. Therefore, it would be possible to educate within a relatively short time a substantial share of the future population of childbearing age with regard to the implications for family and society of restricted childbearing.

The above education policy sounds great, but how does the U.S. influence or coerce the Latin American countries to adopt this policy? Now, here is my modest proposal: Get the Church on our side.

The Catholic Church is an authoritative teaching body already well established in Latin America. The Church has always championed the dignity of the individual and the well-being of mankind. She understands the difficulties that abject poverty and misery impose on the realization of dignity, and she is also aware of the impact overpopulation has in perpetuating said poverty and misery. Contrary to popular opinion, the Church is not against family planning per se but only against the artificial means of birth control. She permits the rhythm system, which is considered a natural means of family planning. So, let us, the United States of America, with our vast riches and enormous technology, devise a simple means to make the rhythm work. It is beyond the scope of this paper to suggest how this will be accomplished, but suffice it to say that if we can put a man on the moon, we can devise the means to make the rhythm work. John Cardinal Wright, the only American in the Curia, when asked "Can the so-called rhythm method of birth control be made to work among uneducated people?" replied as follows:

> . . . I don't know how to make rhythm work--first of all because I'm not a gynecologist. However, there are people who may know how to make it work, but find it considerably more profitable to leave things as they are--with the markup rate on birth control pills and on everything in that particular area, and the high price of the ugly thing that is abortion.[44] (emphasis mine)

The fact that the Church is vitally interested in a means of making the rhythm work is substantiated by no less than the same encyclical, "Humanae Vitae," wherein Pope Paul VI expresses encouragement to men of science:

> . . . who can considerably advance the welfare of marriage and the family, along with peace of conscience, if by pooling their efforts they labor to explain more thoroughly the various conditions favouring a proper regulation of births. It is particularly desirable that . . . medical science succeed in providing a sufficiently secure basis for a regulation of birth, founded on the observance of natural rhythms.[45]

If the United States were able to develop a simple means of making the rhythm work, we just might enlist the power, the prestige, the influence, and the teaching capability of the Church, not only in Latin America but throughout the world, to make a

significant contribution in helping to solve this pressing problem of mankind. The time for action is now because the problem of overpopulation is so pressing and so immediate. This author can think of no solution or recommendation that would have as great an immediate and lasting effect on overpopulation as that set forth in a 20th Century modest proposal.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The rate of population growth throughout the world has reached such proportions that it is considered the most pressing problem facing mankind today. The United States of America as the richest nation in the world has the ethical and moral responsibility to take the lead in helping to solve this problem, not for its own aggrandizement, but for the benefit and welfare of mankind.

The United States has a special interest in the rate of population growth in Latin America, not only from a humanitarian viewpoint, but also because of the strategic implications. To have 600 million souls enveloped in poverty, misery and despair and thus ripe for revolution on its southern flank is certainly not in the best interests of the United States.

The major theme of the present U.S. policy on population is family planning/birth control. The

policy includes participation and cooperation with the endeavors of the United Nations and other international organizations in the field of population control. The policy also includes economic assistance to aid in the economic development of the less developed countries, exploitation of miracle grains and development of the resources of the sea. Essentially, the policy of the United States is to develop any and all means to assist in caring for tremendous populations but that family planning/birth control is necessary for any meaningful advances in the solution of the population problem. The specific policy regarding family planning/birth control is to provide assistance to countries which seek help in reducing high birth rates, provided always that the services which the U.S. makes available can be freely accepted or rejected by the individuals who receive them.

The present policy of the United States regarding family planning/birth control is considered sound, especially in Latin America, because to attempt to compel Latin Americans to practice birth control would only inflame suspicions that our only concern

is to keep them underpopulated and weak. It is considered that the U.S. policy is not at variance with the teachings of the Church, especially with the rights of individuals to form their own conscience in determining the number of children.

The only proposal emanating from this study is the modest proposal to get the Church on our side. The prerequisite to this is for U.S. technology and science to develop a simple means to make the rhythm work. A scientific breakthrough of this nature would certainly be a boon to mankind and would cause the Church to respond, if not with enthusiasm, certainly with acceptance. To get the power, the prestige and the authoritative teaching body of the Church on our side, especially considering the impact this would have in Latin America, would be a major step in solving the population problem. The following statement may sound provocative, but if anyone can solve the population problem, not only in Latin America, but throughout the world, the United States in alliance with the Church hold out the greatest hope for mankind.

APPENDIX A

SIGNATORIES - WORLD LEADERS

DECLARATION ON POPULATION

The "World Leaders Declaration on Population" was first presented to the Security General of the United Nations on December 10, 1966 in observance of Human Rights Day and was signed by 12 heads of state. A year later, 18 additional heads of state or prime ministers joined in signing the declaration. The 30 signatories are:

Australia
Barbados
Colombia
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Finland
Ghana
India
Indonesia
Iran
Japan
Jordan
Republic of Korea
Malaysia
Morocco
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Pakistan
Philippines
Singapore
Sweden
Thailand
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
United Arab Republic
United Kingdom
United States
Yugoslavia

FOOTNOTES

[1]U.S. President's Commission on Income Maintenance Programs, Report of the Commission, Poverty Amid Plenty--the American Paradox (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), pp. 13-21.

[2]U.S. Department of State, "Problems of Population Growth," Message from President Nixon to the Congress, Department of State Bulletin, Vol. LXI, No. 1572 (April 11, 1969) pp. 105-106.

[3]I John 3:17, New Catholic Edition of the Holy Bible (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1949) p. 317.

[4]Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States. A Report to the Congress. U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's--a New Strategy for Peace (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 42.

[5]United Nations, "Statement on Population Growth," U.N. Monthly Chronicle, Vol. 4 (Jan. 1967), p. 106.

[6]United Nations, "Declaration on Population," U.N. Monthly Chronicle, Vol. 5 (Jan. 1968), p. 106.

[7]U.S. Congress, House, Representative Reid inserted in the Record an address on Population Control given by Robert S. McNamara, President, World Bank Group on May 1, 1969. 91st Cong., 1st sess., May 5, 1969. Congressional Record, Vol. 115, Part 9, p. 11448.

[8]U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Aid; Message of the President to Congress," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. XLIV, No. 1137, (April 10, 1961), p. 509.

[9]Lyndon B. Johnson, "State of the Union," Vital Speeches, Vol. XXXI, No. 7, (Jan. 15, 1965), p. 195.

[10]U.S. Department of State, "Objectives of the United States; General Assembly in the 25th Anniversary Year," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. LXIII, No. 1634, (October 19, 1970), p. 442.

[11]U.S. Congress, Senate, Senator Gruening had testimony of Alberto Lleras Camargo, former President of Columbia read into the Record. 89th Cong., 1st sess., July 9, 1965. Congressional Record, Vol. III, Part 12, p. 16200.

[12]U.S. Department of State, "Quality of Life in the Americas," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. LXI, No. 1589 (Dec. 8, 1969), p. 503.

[13]Joseph Marion Jones, Does Overpopulation Mean Poverty? (Washington, D.C.: Center for International Economic Growth, 1962), p. 29.

[14]U.S. Department of State,"Quality of Life in the Americas," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. LXI, No. 1589 (Dec. 8, 1969), p. 519.

[15]Ibid., p. 519.

[16]Luis Escobar Cerda, "After Caracas: Problems and Perspectives," Population Bulletin, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, (Feb. 1968), p. 9. Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau, 1968.

[17]Syllabus, Course IV, "Military Strategy and Strategic Posture" (Washington, D.C.: The National War College, 1970), p. 2.

[18]U.S. Department of State, "Quality of Life in the Americas," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. LXI, No. 1589, Dec. 8, 1969, p. 501.

[19]U.S. Department of State, "United States Population Policy--Origins and Development," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. LXIII, No. 1630, Sept. 21, 1970, pp. 317-26.

[20]U.S. Congress, Senate, Senator Robert F. Kennedy reports on the Alliance for Progress. 89th Cong., 2d sess., 1966. Congressional Record, Vol. 112, Part 8, p. 10191.

[21]U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Foreign Economic Assistance, Report No. 1359, 89th Cong., 2d sess., 1966, p. 15.

[22]U.S. Department of State, "Problems of Population Growth," Message from President Nixon to the Congress, Department of State Bulletin, Vol. LXI, No. 1572, (April 11, 1969), p. 106.

[23]Ibid., p. 3.

[24]J. Maynne Stycos, "Opposition to Family Planning in Latin America: Conservative Nationalism," Demography, 1968, Vol. 5, No. 2, Washington, D.C.: Population Association of America, 1969.

[25]Ibid., p. 854.

[26]Ibid., p. 848.

[27]"Soviet Population Theory from Marx to Kosygin," Population Bulletin, Vol. XXIII, No. 4, (Oct. 1967) Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau, 1967.

[28]Darcy Ribeiro, "Genocide with Pills," Vispera II, No. 7, Oct. 1968, pp. 66-70.

[29]Ivan Illich, "Popular Control of Power and Potency," Vispera II, No. 7, Oct. 1968, pp. 71-74.

[30]Thomas G. Saunders, "Opposition To Family Planning in Latin America: The Non-Marxist Left," American Universities Field Staff Reports--South America Series, Vol. XVII, No. 5, 1970, p. 6.

[31]Walter M. Abbott, S.J., "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," The Documents of Vatican II, New York: Paulist Press, p. 302.

> "Human beings should also be judiciously informed of scientific advances in the exploration of methods by which spouses can be helped in arranging the number of their children. The reliability of those methods should be adequately proven and then harmony with the moral order should be clear."

[32]Pope Paul VI, On the Development of Peoples (encyclical), March 26, 1967 (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1967), pp. 26-27.

[33]George H. Dunne, S.J., "Observations and Conclusions," Threat to Peace?, p. 184. New York: P.J. Kennedy and Sons, 1965.

[34]Pope Paul VI, Humanae Vitae (encyclical), July 1968, Study Club Edition (New York: Paulist Press, 1968), p. 11.

[35]Robert G. Hoyt, "The Birth Control Debate," National Catholic Reporter, Kansas City, Mo., March 6, 1969, p. 7.

[36]Editorial, New York Times, Aug. 18, 1968, p. 2.

[37]Editorial, Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 22, 1968, p. 6.

[38]Editorial, Washington Post, Aug. 4, 1968, p. 9.

[39]Richard W. Patch, "Attitudes Toward Sex, Reproduction, and Contraception in Bolivia and Peru," American Universities Field Staff Reports, South America Series, Vol. XVII, No. 11, March 1970, p. 3.

[40]Arthur F. Corwin, Contemporary Mexican Attitudes Toward Population, Poverty and Public Opinion, University of Florida Press, 1963, p. 47.

[41]Calvert L. Dedrick, "600 Million Latin Americans", Population Control--Threat to Peace?, New York: P.J. Kennedy and Sons, 1965, pp. 45-46.

[42]Louis A. Landa (ed.), "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of the Poor in Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country and for Making Them Beneficial to the Public," Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), pp. 439-46.

[43]Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States. A Report to the Congress. U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's--A New Strategy for Peace. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970).

[44]John Cardinal Wright (Interview), "Religion in Tomorrow's World," U.S. News and World Report, Aug. 31, 1970, p. 57.

[45]Pope Paul VI, "Humanae Vitae" (encyclical), July 1968, Study Club Edition (New York: Paulist Press, 1968), p. 18.

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